town's best for the year.

Roberta Flack and others.

new dance routines to go with some of the songs on

24 track machines. THEN, wait and see what

on tour. We had cake backstage in the dressing room. I'm glad everyone

to talk now . . . "

"Hi, how's everyone over there?"

Jermaine is now taking

and asked some very detailed questions about the British charts; trying to figure out what made

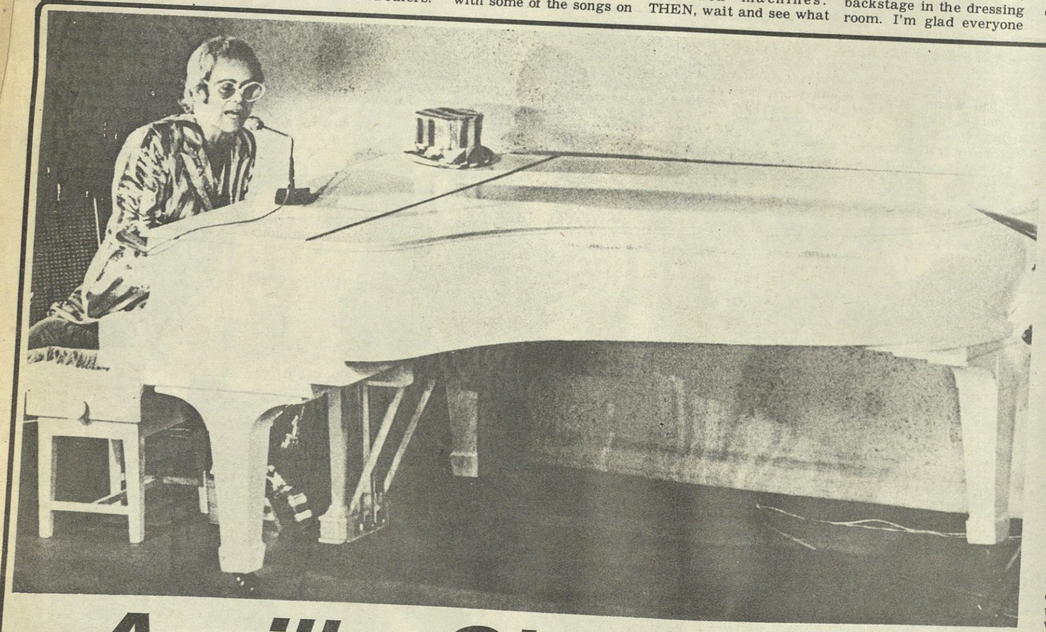
his wedding when he said, "Oh, do you want to speak to Hazel cause she's here."

People are always sending around rumours that we're either feuding enemies or best friends

school and I work with oils at home. You have to be very careful with oils. They get all over things permanently if they're not

was from the school board. The second rumour had it that the group had not spent enough time at home in school.

ROBIN KATZ



A silly Christmas with Elton John

THE SCENE is a spacious suite on the fourth floor of the Inn on the Park Hotel. In the middle of the room stands a vast breakfast table stacked to the brim with coffee pots, toast and jars of marmalade. At one end can be seen three figures, two male and one female. The female is an attractive female, sporting a sweat inducing posterior, the first male can be identified as a denimed, hungover and slightly bleary looking journalist and the other needs no introduction at all — for he's a super star.

"Now if I could hide up in that bed in the wall, I could spring out on Charles," says the aforementioned superstar, struggling not to lose his tinted specs as he wrestled with the bedclothes.

Yes it's Elton John, recently back from a mammoth ten week tour of the States and still as outrageously amiable as ever.

He's been here two weeks now, during which time he's managed to write and record a Christmas single, attend the match in Scotland, write a song for Rod Stewart, as well as complete the preparations for his forthcoming tour. Personally I haven't a clue where he gets the energy. But first the States. Needless to say it was an overwhelming success.

"Luckily the trip was made much easier this time because we hired a private jet, the Starship I, which meant that we could base ourselves in one hotel and then fly out to each individual gig. Led Zeppelin used it on their last tour as well. It's fantastic inside with bathrooms and showers, a living room, bedroom, a huge bar, two video television sets and a Hammond organ. The only trouble is that as I don't take a large entourage the bloody thing looked half empty most of

the time. The eight of us felt as if we were playing hide and seek. But it certainly meant we didn't get nearly as exhausted as we would have been if we'd had to check in and out of hotels throughout the tour."

One of the prime objects of the tour was obviously to promote the Yellow Brick Road album and just as obviously that object has been successfully accomplished. The album is already a million seller and is now number one in the American charts.

"I think Yellow Brick Road is probably the high point of my career to date," said Elton thoughtfully. "We've now got to make a change again, just like we did after Madman Across The Water. It will have to be the turning point because we've gone as far as we can with this type of sound."

Did this mean that he was unlikely to return to using Paul Buckmaster?

"No I don't think so. We used Del Newman on this one because we wanted to get a different type of arrangement otherwise the press would have said, 'Oh it's Buckmaster and John AGAIN.' Del did a fantastic job but so did Paul on Don't Shoot Me. I think we're all bound to work together again.' "One thing we have decided is that the next album will be recorded in the States. This means that we'll probably be having a few people guesting and the whole album will probably be very loose in concept. I'll also be adding another member on keyboards. I can play electric piano OK but I want somebody on organ to fill out the sound of the band a bit more."

Kiki

Since he's been back Elton's had the pleasure of watching Kiki Dee, one of Rocket Record's first artists, slip quietly into the charts with Amoureuse. She's also got an album out now called Loving And Free and there are a couple of Elton John and Bernie Taupin songs on it.

"This is really the first time we've written for anyone else and it was quite a step. Up to now we've always refused when people have asked us to write for them because we didn't think it would work. We decided to write a couple for Kiki becasue we were desperate to change her image from the sort of 'bouffont singer from the Latino in South Shields' to what she really is. She's been around for a long time Kiki and she's been messed about one hell of a lot. She's the same as any artist, all she needs is a bit of confidence and interest

shown in her and she'll blossom.

"Also on this album she was allowed to record properly. Before she'd been used to going in and somebody handing her a lyric sheet and saying, 'Here's the lyrics, there's the backing tracks — you get on with it. On this album she's written four of the songs, which is something she's never done before. As a matter of fact I think her songs are the best on the album. Also, she can sing the arse off most people."

Solo Bernie

But if Elton and Bernie have decided to contribute some of their songs to Rocket artists, was there a possibility that they might write songe for him?

"There's every possibility. As a matter of fact Bernie's working on the idea for a solo album now where he will write the lyrics and each Rocket artist will contribute to the music. That means that Kiki would write one, Mike Silver another and so on. It could work out really well because Bernie's been wanting to do another album for some time now. I think he's still recovering from having to write Kiki's songs from a girl's angle. He spent the whole day standing in front of the mirror with a dress on! — just kidding by the way."

Rod's song

Even the thought of Bernie in a Maid Marion outfit proved too much for me, so we moved on. How about the Xmas single and the song they'd written for Rod Stewart?

"Well the one we wrote for Rod is called Let He Be Your Car. I guess it's just an indication of our changing state of mind because, as I told you, we never really wanted to write for anyone else. With Rocket it's different because it's our company but with Rod it was something we decided to do on the spur of the moment. I don't know if he'll release it as a single or an album track or what — just have to wait and see I guess.

"The Xmas single is a real loon about and something we'd like to do a lot more of. We've never written a song especially tailored to be a single. Up until now something's just been taken off the album and come out months later. This time we wrote it last Sunday morning, recorded it in the

afternoon and it'll be out this Friday. Taupin's really excelled himself on the lyrics as well — I think they're some of the best he's written. They're just loony, you know, thanking everybody for seventy three and all that. The A side's called Step Into Xmas and the B side's Ho Ho Ho — Who'd Be A Turkey At Xmas — I told you it was loony! As a matter of fact I sound a bit like the Ronettes on it!"

The forthcoming tour is something Elton's really looking forward to. They've just added two extra dates (Liverpool and Sheffield) and the whole event looks like being a giant party.

Wales?

"Actually there's going to be so many band s doing these Xmas party tours around then that it could get a bit out of hand," said Elton looking highly delighted at the prospect!" The Faces are doing one as well and as Rod put it the other night, this could well be the year of the Silly Xmas Shows!

"We've had so many letters in about this tour that it's just incredible. We added Liverpool and Sheffield because of all the mail. I'm dying to do it, I must say, but I was worried about the band being a bit tired. We really wanted to play in Wales but there was nowhere we could get. The kids obviously wanted us but nobody else seemed to want to know."

Come along Wales, isn't this sort of thing happening a bit too often this year. A 'silly Xmas Show' from E. John Esq. is something that should not be missed.

MICHAEL BEATTY